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SUBJECT: BULGARIA NAMES CAREER DIPLOMAT AS AMBASSADOR TO UN

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: President Parvanov appointed career diplomat Raiko Raichev (also spelled Raychev) as Bulgaria's new permanent representative to the United Nations. Raichev, 52, currently serves as Chief of Staff to Foreign Minister Ivailo Kalfin. A non-controversial figure, Raichev has held several posts at Bulgaria's mission in New York, most recently as deputy to the permanent representative. We have had good working relations with Raichev and we expect our UN Mission will have the same. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Raichev, who is expected to assume his new post in September, was appointed Ambassador to the UN by presidential decree on August 14, more than a year after the term of his predecessor expired. Insiders attribute the delay to the difficulty in finding a candidate who met the high standards for the post and at the same time was also politically acceptable to President Parvanov, the lobby around FM Kalfin, and the three parties in the Socialist-led coalition. Contacts told us that after all options for political appointees were discarded, the front runners were narrowed down to two career diplomats - Raichev and Emil Yalnuzov, current head of the Foreign Ministry's United Nations Directorate. Raichev was ultimately chosen because of his extensive experience at the Mission in New York and his close ties with Kalfin. Raichev will succeed another career diplomat, former Deputy Foreign Minister Stefan Tafrov, who occupied the post from 2001 to 2006.

13. (U) Born on March 29, 1955, in the village of Tsarkva, Raichev finished English-language school in Sofia and earned a degree in international relations from the Higher Institute of Economics in Sofia. He speaks English, Russian and French. He is married with one child.

14. (U) Raichev has 15 years of experience as a diplomat. His posts include:

- From August 2005 - Chief of Staff to the Foreign Minister;
- July 2005 - August 2005: Head of Arms Control and International Security Department, NATO and International Security Directorate, MFA;
- March 2005 - July 2005: Head of Global Security and Disarmament Department, NATO and International Security Directorate, MFA;
- November 2001 - January 2005: Deputy to the Permanent Representative at the UN and Deputy Representative at the UN Security Council, Bulgaria's Mission in New York;
- January 2001 - November 2001: Head of UN and General Issues Department, Analyses and International Affairs Planning Directorate, MFA;
- January 2000 - December 2000: Head of UN and General Issues Department, Coordination and Planning Directorate, MFA;
- October 1997 - December 1999: Expert on Council of Europe Political and Social issues, International Organizations and Human Rights Directorate, MFA;
- September 1994 - September 1997: Counselor, Bulgaria's Mission in New York;
- December 1993 - September 1994: First Secretary, Bulgaria's Mission in New York;
- August 1992 - December 1993: First Secretary for economic issues, Bulgaria's Mission in New York.

15. (U) Raichev's appointment has been favorably greeted in Bulgaria, with media coverage focusing on the fact that he is a career diplomat with experience in UN matters. According to local media, the only public controversy in Raichev's past was a high-profile conflict with Slavi Pashovski, Bulgaria's Ambassador to the UN in the early 1990s when Raichev served there as First Secretary.

16. (SBU) COMMENT: We have had a good working relationship with Raichev and expect that our UN Mission will have the same. He is, at least with us, results oriented and looks for practical solutions. Being chief of staff to the Foreign Ministry, he has an executive leadership style. He is a true UN hand and comfortable in multilateral negotiations.
BEYRLE